

A second factor of some importance is that the Canadian foreign service is "career rotational". The normal entry is at the training or probationary level, which has an upper age-limit of 31. The majority of entrants are in their mid-twenties and enter the service directly from university, often with postgraduate training. The classification system was recently changed, with a reduction in the number of officer levels from ten to the current five, plus a training level. This reduction in the number of levels, combined with broad pay-bands, provides management with flexibility in the employment of its personnel and tends to obscure marginal differences in rank. Rates of pay will be based on performance rather than automatic progression based on years of service through specified pay-bands. It seems that officers determined to make a career in the foreign service have the opportunity, through outstanding performance, of moving ahead quickly, since the sole criterion for advancement is merit.

The fact that the service is "career" is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that the number of appointments to senior positions from outside the service is small. There have, of course, been such appointments over the years, but these have been exceptions that prove the general rule. The percentage of such appointments is nowhere near as great as that within the United States system. Ambassadors do not, for example, submit their resignations automatically when a new Government takes office. The prime virtue of this system is that it provides recognizable goals for capable young people entering the foreign service. It permits officers to decide after some years of experience of the life and work in the foreign service whether they wish to continue on to seek known goals or to seek careers elsewhere in the public service or in private life.

The service is also rotational -- i.e., officers are expected to serve both at home and abroad and the tendency seems to be towards roughly equivalent time in the two environments. Service in Ottawa involves work throughout the public service, not just in the Department of External Affairs. The number of secondments from the foreign service to other Government departments and agencies -- and more recently to universities -- has steadily grown. Secondment of public servants into the foreign service for two- or three-year terms is expected to grow. This is a reflection of the wide variety of domestic interests to be served abroad for which exposure to the totality of Canadian Government operations is both necessary and valuable. Since the Canadian foreign service is simply a part of the wider public service and not a distinct body established by legislation, as is the United States foreign service, foreign service officers in Ottawa are under precisely the same terms and conditions as those working in other government departments. This serves as a useful cathartic for those who might otherwise become obsessed with the status and perquisites of the diplomatic syndrome -- not nearly as impressive, by the way, as the popular press would lead one to believe.

A third factor is integration of all Canadian Government activities abroad. The foreign policy review to which I referred earlier provided a conceptual framework for thinking about policy that illustrated the interrelationship of policies and programs. Because of this interrelationship, the means of implementing policy must be co-ordinated. The Government thus decided that steps should be taken to integrate foreign operations in a systematic way.